by Kevin M. Savetz

Killer Customizations

Shareware that fine-tunes the Mac experience

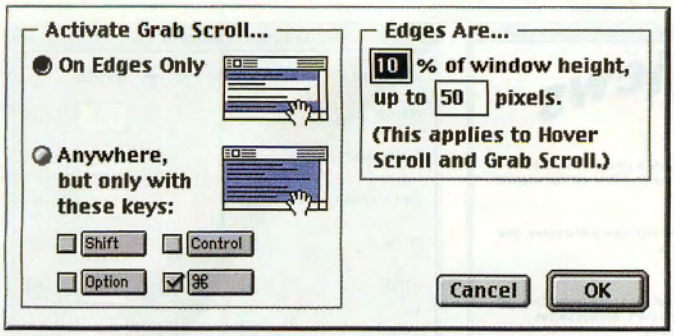
Remember the tale of the seven samurai as told in the 1954 movie classic *Shichinin No Samurai*? It's about a village, plagued by bandits and unable to buy weapons for defense, that appeals to a veteran samurai (down on his luck but with a good heart) for help. He agrees, and then, in turn, recruits six other samurai to help him save the townspeople in return for room and board.

So what does this have to do with the Mac? It's a zen connection, you understand. There's a certain allure to customizing the way your Mac works. Some Mac addicts don't have the resources to buy all the latest software, though. That's where the seven utilities come in. We've collected seven programs that will do work on your Mac in exchange for some space on your hard drive (and the appropriate shareware fee to the program's author).

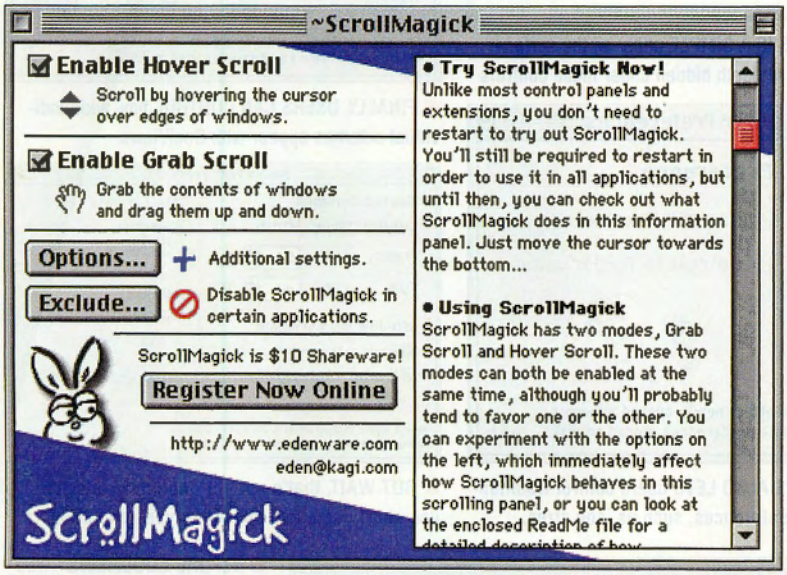
Some utilities strive to make the Mac's interface a little prettier or more convenient. A little tuning can go a long way. Other programs dig deeper, replacing chunks of the operating system with powerful counterparts. These can save you time and change the way you use your Mac, making the experience more intuitive, more elegant.

FIND THESE utilities on The Disc

Illustrations by Adam Vanderhoof



■ WHEN YOU OPEN the ScrollMagick control panel's options area, you'll be able to control just how ScrollMagick works—or doesn't work—its wonders.


~ScrollMagick
Enable Hover Scroll
Scroll by hovering the cursor over edges of windows.
Enable Grab Scroll
Grab the contents of windows and drag them up and down.
Options...
Additional settings.
Exclude...
Disable ScrollMagick in certain applications.
ScrollMagick is $10 Shareware!
Register Now Online
http://www.edenware.com
eden@kagi.com
ScrollMagick
• Try ScrollMagick Now!
Unlike most control panels and extensions, you don't need to restart to try out ScrollMagick. You'll still be required to restart in order to use it in all applications, but until then, you can check out what ScrollMagick does in this information panel. Just move the cursor towards the bottom...
• Using ScrollMagick
ScrollMagick has two modes, Grab Scroll and Hover Scroll. These two modes can both be enabled at the same time, although you'll probably tend to favor one or the other. You can experiment with the options on the left, which immediately affect how ScrollMagick behaves in this scrolling panel, or you can look at the enclosed ReadMe file for a

■ THIS IS SCROLLMAGICK'S nerve center. Hover and Grab scrolling can be enabled and disabled here, help is available, and all those niggling controls lurk just under the surface.

■ NOTICE THE FUNKY little hand with the triangle on it near the bottom of the Web page? That's ScrollMagick scrolling the page away with nary a click.

ScrollMagick

Perhaps the only thing better than a tweaked-out scroll bar is not having to reach for the scroll bar at all. That's the gimmick of ScrollMagick, a $10 add-on that will make you think twice before mousing over to that scroll bar. Using it, you can scroll up or down simply by pointing the cursor near the top or bottom of a window. You don't even have to implore your overworked fingers to click: just point to the window's edge and you'll be scrolling.

You might be dubious about the usefulness of this utility, but the effect is rather elegant—once you get used to it. The farther up or down you push the cursor, the faster the document will scroll.

ScrollMagick lets you control how much of the window is the scroll zone (although the default of 10 percent works nicely), or you can specify modifier keys to activate scrolling from anywhere in the window. ScrollMagick also lets you use a hand cursor to grab the contents of a window and drag them up and down.

Requires: System 7 or later
Cost: Shareware, $10
Download: http://www.edenware.com or find it on The Disc.

CoolViews

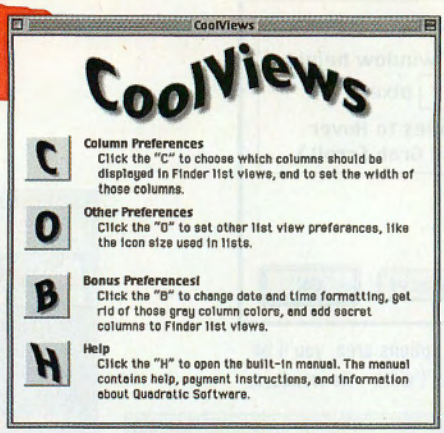
We all spend a fair share of our time staring at icons and file names in the Finder. You have to admit that Mac OS 8's List View looks, well, different. All that gray gets bleak before too long, doesn't it? And those thin horizontal lines between each item—you either love them or hate them.

CoolViews is an interface tweaker whose sole purpose is to revamp the look of files viewed with the Finder. First, you can banish the gray. Pick any solid color to replace the gray, shaded sort columns in the List View. Next, you can do away with those separator lines (or not). CoolViews goes several steps further. You can shorten the Finder's verbose date descriptions (why slog through "Mon, Nov 17, 1997, 2:42 PM" when "11/17/97" will do?) and resize the Finder's columns so there's more room to see long file names.

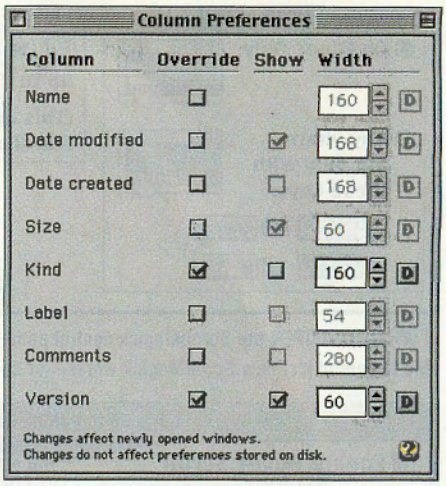
List View is the Finder's most information-packed setting. If you leave most of your Finder windows in List View most of the time, you can save both screen real estate and time by changing the column widths and information displayed to suit your needs. Developers and other nerds will appreciate CoolViews' ability to show files' type and creator information in List View.

CoolViews is $20 shareware. Twenty clams is a small price to pay for the lift in your spirits that comes after stomping out the Finder's depressing gray exterior. Consider its other features a bonus.

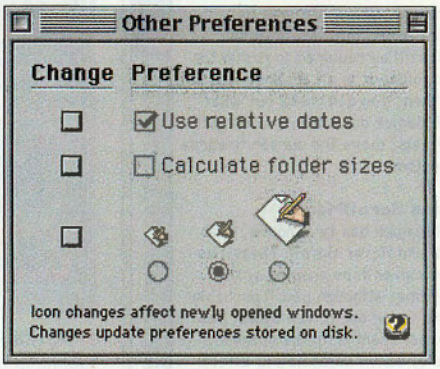
Requires: Mac OS 8
Cost: Shareware, $20
Download: http://www.quadratic.com/Cool
or find it on The Disc.


CoolViews
CoolViews
C
Column Preferences
Click the "C" to choose which columns should be displayed in Finder list views, and to set the width of those columns.
O
Other Preferences
Click the "O" to set other list view preferences, like the icon size used in lists.
B
Bonus Preferences!
Click the "B" to change date and time formatting, get rid of those grey column colors, and add secret columns to Finder list views.
H
Help
Click the "H" to open the built-in manual. The manual contains help, payment instructions, and information about Quadratic Software.

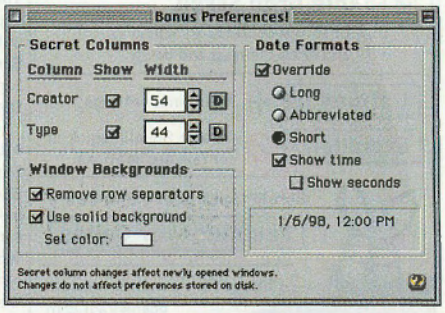
■ COOLVIEWS IS A SIMPLE utility on the surface, but it has lots of depth hidden under those controls.



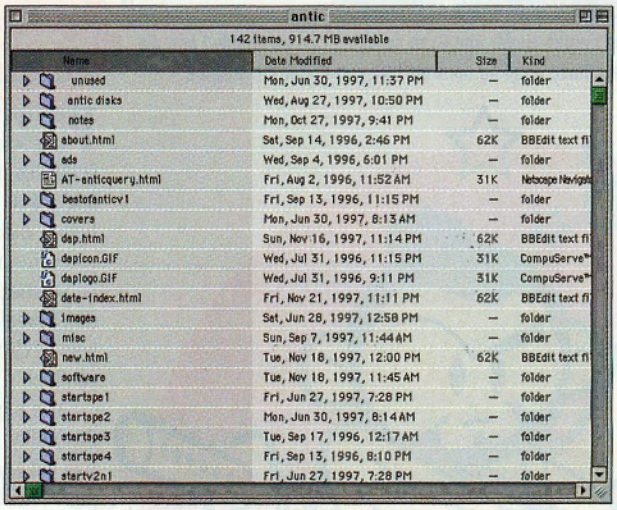
■ FINALLY, USERS CAN CONTROL how wide individual columns appear with CoolViews.



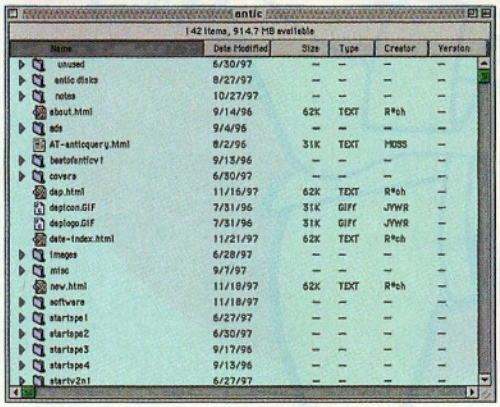
■ COOLVIEWS ALSO LETS users control traditional List View preferences, such as icon sizes.



■ BUT WAIT, that's not all! CoolViews lets you use short dates and show file types and creators.

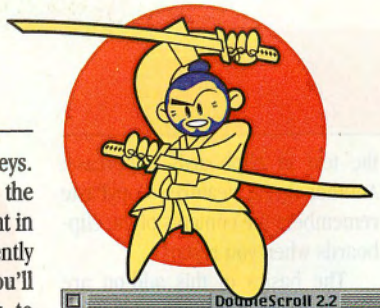


■ BEFORE COOLVIEWS—You either love or hate the grays and lines that fill Mac OS 8's List View windows.



■ COOLVIEWS TAKES CARE of the lines and grays, making a soothing single-color background. The utility also adds some new column categories, and it lets users control column widths.

DoubleScroll

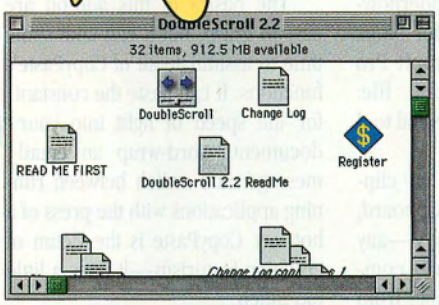


DoubleScroll is a simple interface addition that will become a fast friend. This control panel doubles your pleasure every time you point your mouse at a scroll bar. DoubleScroll puts two arrows on each end of a scroll bar, so you can scroll up or down from either side of the bar. I see you suppressing that yawn, but stick with me. DoubleScroll's namesake feature isn't the best part: it also enables live scrolling in all applications. When you drag the scroll thumb—the little moving box in the scroll bar—the window scrolls in real time rather than jumping to the new position when you release the mouse button.

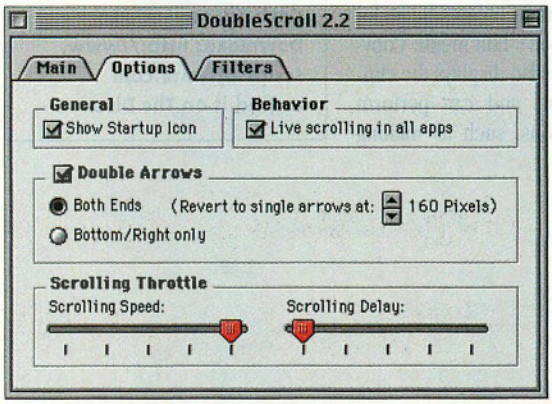
DoubleScroll also adds keyboard shortcuts for quickly getting around your documents. You can Command-click the up arrow to jump to the top of your spreadsheet, for instance. Option-clicking an arrow allows you to move up or down a page at a time—a lifesaver for PowerBook users missing page-up and page-down keys. Shift-clicking on any point in the scroll bar lands you at that point in the document. If you frequently edit very long documents, you'll appreciate the utility's ability to crank up the scrolling speed to a blistering rate (or tone it down if you scroll past your intended destination all too often).

My only complaint about DoubleScroll is its Live Scrolling feature, which doesn't work flawlessly in all applications (for instance, Live Scrolling makes Nisus Writer jitter and twitch like an overcaffeinated DOS user). Happily, the control panel offers a filter so you can turn the feature off when using specific applications.

Requires: System 7 or later
Cost: Shareware, $10
Download: http://www.amargosa.com/doublescroll.html or find it on The Disc.



■ NOPE, YOU'RE NOT seeing double. There should be two scroll arrows at the end of each scroll bar.



■ HERE'S WHERE USERS can change how scroll arrows appear, and also exercise some control over the scrolling throttle.

DragThing

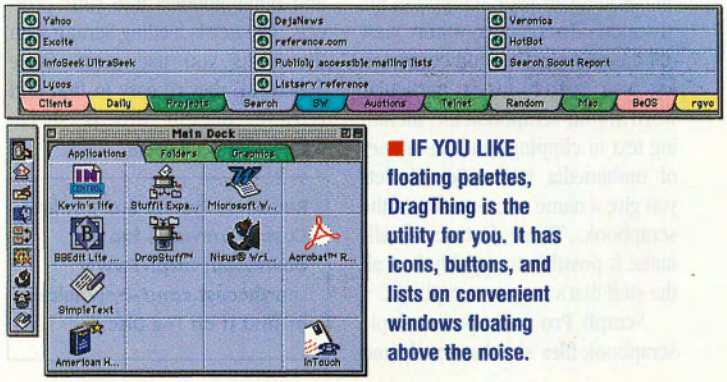
A good program launcher is a must-have utility. The alternative—a desktop or Apple menu littered with aliases—isn't a pretty sight. Apple's Launcher utility is a good start, but it's neither powerful nor flexible. Instead of using that, grab a copy of DragThing, one of the best launchers available.

DragThing presents a colorful dock that is home to any number of tabbed pages. For easy access to a program, document, or folder, just drag it onto an empty space on DragThing's dock. The next time you want to access that item, you will find it right where you left it on the dock; double-click its icon to open it. As the name implies, you can also drag and drop icons onto docked applications. For example, to open a text file in your word processor, you can drag the file to the word processor icon in DragThing.

You can feed DragThing URLs just as easily as you feed it Finder icons. Just drag a link from Netscape Navigator or Microsoft Internet Explorer to place a URL on the dock. You can group different types of sites on different pages, making DragThing an excellent tool for organizing URLs—certainly a whole lot easier that riffling through the enormous, unsorted list of bookmarks in your Web browser.

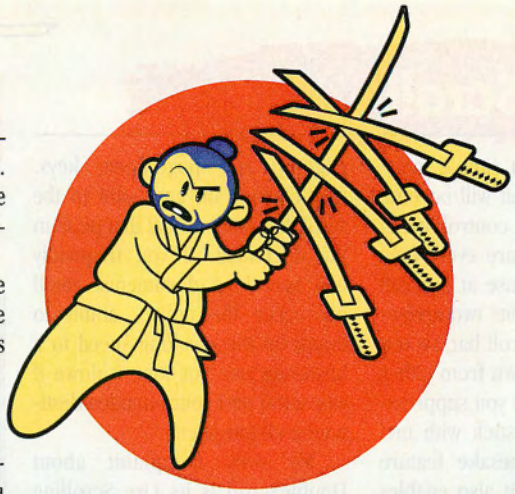
You can squeeze DragThing's dock down to a thumbnail with a click of the mouse, and keep the minimized dock floating on top of other application windows at all times so your frequently used files are always one click away.

Requires: System 7.5 or later
Cost: Shareware, $15
Download: http://www.dcs.gla.ac.uk/~~james/dragthing.html or find it on The Disc.



■ IF YOU LIKE floating palettes, DragThing is the utility for you. It has icons, buttons, and lists on convenient windows floating above the noise.

CopyPaste

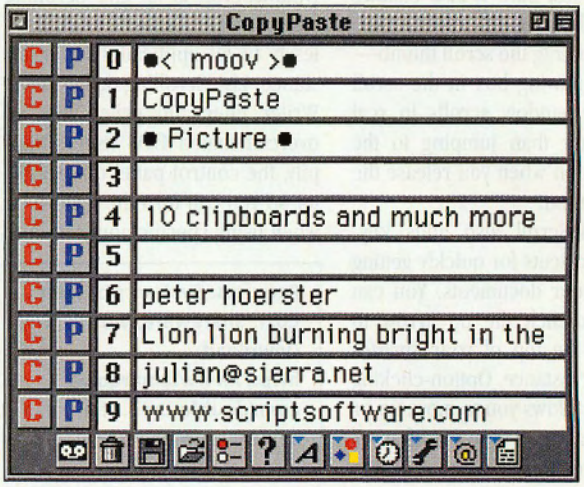


The Clipboard is an essential, invisible tool. You probably use it a dozen times a day without thinking twice about it. For all its utility, the Clipboard is underpowered. CopyPaste does for your Mac's Clipboard what ScrapIt Pro does for your scrapbook file: makes it beefy. It is an essential tool for power users.

CopyPaste serves up ten clipboards. To use a specific clipboard, type Command-C (or X or V—any of the regular Clipboard commands) followed by a number from 0 to 9. If you forget which one is which, you'll find a list of the clipboards and their contents under your application's Edit menu. CopyPaste's palette also displays the clipboard contents and can perform other operations, such as making the text in clipboards uppercase. Another great feature: CopyPaste remembers the contents of the clipboards when you restart.

The basics of this add-on are easy to grasp, but it can take some time to assimilate all of CopyPaste's functions. It can paste the constant for the speed of light into your document, word-wrap an email message, and switch between running applications with the press of a hot key. CopyPaste is the victim of creeping featurism—it does a little too much.

Requires: System 7 or later
Cost: Shareware, $20
Download: http://www.scriptsoftware.com
or find it on The Disc.


CopyPaste
C P 0 ●< moov >●
C P 1 CopyPaste
C P 2 ● Picture ●
C P 3
C P 4 10 clipboards and much more
C P 5
C P 6 peter hoerster
C P 7 Lion lion burning bright in the
C P 8 julian@sierra.net
C P 9 www.scriptsoftware.com

■ **WHEN ONE CLIPBOARD isn't enough, CopyPaste multiplies that paltry number by 10, and it tells users what's on each one.**

ScrapIt Pro

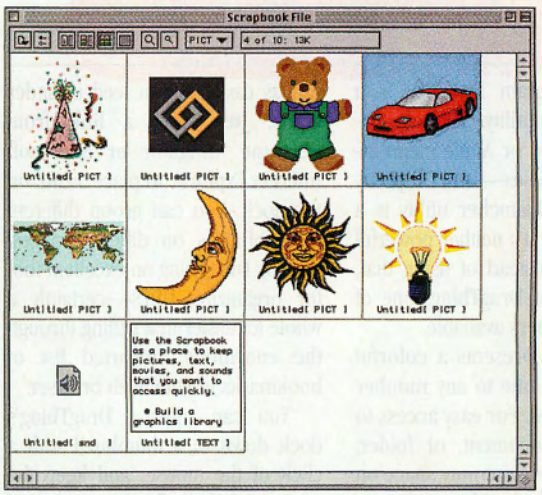
There's no way to say it nicely: the Mac's Scrapbook sucks. It has barely changed since it made its first appearance under the Apple menu back in '84—it was novel then but simply hasn't kept up with the times. Throw it away. Download ScrapIt Pro. Trust me.

ScrapIt Pro is loaded with features, but it will take just two of them to win you over: Gallery View and Find. Gallery View lets you see all the items in your scrapbook file at once. There are other view options as well. The Find command lets you search for a particular word in your scrapbook file, including text in clippings and the names of multimedia items. ScrapIt lets you give a name to every item in the scrapbook. Those features finally make it possible to quickly find all the stuff that's in your scrapbook.

ScrapIt Pro can open multiple scrapbook files simultaneously and store text; PICT, GIF, and JPG graphics; sound files; QuickTime movies; even QuickDraw 3-D objects. Paste them all in. Or drag them in, because ScrapIt is fully drag-and-drop compatible.

Finally having access to a decent scrapbook will change the way you work on your Mac—for the better, as you become accustomed to dropping oft-used graphics, boilerplate text, common HTML code, and other goodies into your projects. The key is feeding ScrapIt with the items you use most. Once they're in, they're easy to find and retrieve. ScrapIt Pro is shareware—$20 well spent.

Requires: System 6.0.5 or later
Cost: Shareware, $20
Download: http://www.northcoast.com/~~~jvholder
or find it on The Disc.


Scrapbook File
Use the Scrapbook as a place to keep pictures, text, movies, and sounds that you want to access quickly.
• Build a graphics library

■ **THE BUTTONS ACROSS the top of ScrapIt Pro's window let users control files, views, and other aspects of the program.**

Aaron Light

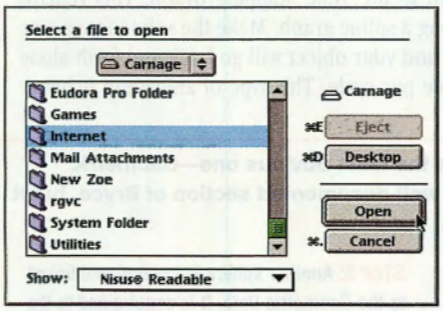
Years ago, I discovered ClickChange, a commercial program that could make all sorts of funky enhancements to the Mac's interface. Today, a popular shareware program called Kaleidoscope does similar tricks: you can use it to modify just about every aspect of your Mac's interface (see page 26 for more information about Kaleidoscope). I can't be trusted with such tools—after a series of questionable color choices, my poor Mac just ends up looking gaudy.

Besides, some of us don't want glitz. We don't want our Macs to look like a Kaleidoscope. We fell in love with the new look of Mac OS 8 and, frankly, can't understand why you'd want to mess with Apple's look of perfection. Aaron Light is an extension for purists. What it does, in the words of its creator, Gregory Landweber (perennial interface tweaker and developer of Kaleidoscope, Greg's Buttons, and other popular shareware), is "make Mac OS 8 look more like Mac OS 8."

This interface enhancement makes more apps conform to System 8's Platinum Appearance. The beauty of Aaron Light is that you might not notice it once it has been installed. Its job as a little 56K extension is to beat into submission all the programs that don't work with Mac OS 8's Appearance Manager. It patches the progress bars, floating windows, dialog box backgrounds, and menu glitches in applications that haven't caught up with the times. Not being distracted by interface elements that don't quite mesh is one of life's simple pleasures. The final touch of Aaron Light's understated elegance is that it lets you use Epsi Sans Bold as the system font rather than blocky Chicago.

Using Aaron Light couldn't be simpler: toss it in the Extensions folder and forget about it. Its single option, the ability to replace Chicago with Epsi Sans Bold, doesn't even require a new control panel: if you pick Chicago from the Appearance control panel, Aaron will silently substitute Epsi. If you pick Charcoal, that's what you'll get.

Requires: System 7 or later
Cost: Shareware, $5
Download: http://greg.math.harvard.edu
or find it on The Disc.



■ AARON LIGHT is perhaps the most subtle of the Seven Utilities. It has no controls, and it doesn't do anything fancy. It's like BASF—Aaron Light doesn't make the Mac OS interface, it makes it more Mac-like.

And one for System 7.x

■ FINDER OPTIONS LETS System 7.x users take advantage of a few of Mac OS 8's new features.

Finder Options

In every revision of the operating system, Apple adds enhancements to the Finder, then, inevitably, buries some of them. This little control panel represents Mac hacking at its finest, enabling those features that Apple has hidden from view. Sure, you can go into ResEdit and tweak the Finder by hand (and we considered telling you how), but it's a whole lot easier—and safer—to let this little utility do it for you. Finder Options is for Macs that are still using a version of System 7. Mac OS 8 users need not apply (primarily because many of the goodies it adds made it into the later version).

Finder Options enables several nice touches and will leave you wondering why Apple left them out. With it, Command-Delete moves an item to the Trash and Control-drag creates an alias of an icon. Later, when you can't find the original file that belongs to that alias, you'll notice that Finder Options has put a Reveal Original Item command under the File menu. (It does the same thing as the Reveal Original button in the Get Info box, but it's easier to find.) In addition, you can disable ZoomRects, which might be worth doing if you use a very slow Mac.

Requires: System 7.5.3 or later
Cost: Free
Download: http://www.cstone.net/~rbraun/mac/finder
or find it on The Disc.

Kevin Savetz (savetz@northcoast.com) is a computer technology writer based in Northern California. If you don't register your shareware, he will personally come to your house and bore you to tears with his collection of obsolete home computers, starting with the Apple III.